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and Manner—two things which are so often confounded? Will he kindly tear to pieces Mr. Ruckstuhl's definition of style:

"Style in art is a matter of fundamental composition, of the arrangement of lines, masses and color; of words, of sounds and of movements, indicating a departure from the truth of nature and from the commonplace."

"Manner in art is a matter of superficial technical execution, indicating a departure from the truth of nature and from the commonplace."

If these are not invulnerable, will he help us to find such as are beyond successful attack? Laying so much stress on style as he does, he should have a clear notion of what constitutes style and how to produce it in the abstract and in the concrete—good and bad style.

We, also, positively insist on style in a work of art but by no means to the extent that did Châteaubriand, or to the extent that Mr. Brownell does, above all not to the extent that the extreme "individualists" do. But no work can be entirely great or beautiful in which style is entirely ignored. But we repeat, we agree with Herbert Spencer that the first requirement of good style is "the economy of the attention of the reader" to insure clarity and ease of reading, or, in plastic or musical art to insure ease of contemplation or of hearing. Now if Mr. Brownell will complete Spencer's work and indicate to us the other elements of good style he will do his country a great service.

Finally there is this supreme question in every art standard: Shall artists and the world look at art from the standpoint of the *beautiful* or the *truthful*? One would suppose that he leans toward the point of view that truth counts for more than beauty—at least in plastic art. For in his "French Traits" he says: "In art!" exclaims a French critic, Jacques de Biez, 'we care more for the truth than even for the beautiful.' Nothing could be more just. It is precisely for this reason that sentimental and poetical peoples have hitherto wholly surpassed the French in art where the beautiful is of even more importance than the truth—Italy in plastic art, for example, the Germans in musical and England in poetry." He has not made clear that he does not lean towards this idea—of the subordination of beauty to truth in art. But further along the same page he begins to make us think he does agree with M. Biez, but his style robs his language of so much *definiteness* that we are not convinced. What we need in a standard is a statement whether, *yes* or *no*, beauty should be of the *first* consideration, and truth of the *second* consideration in a work of

art. We say yes, beauty first, last and all the time, and beauty—when relatively perfect, will exclude untruth and evil.

Mr. Brownell says in "French Art" that in the nineteenth century "nature has acquired new dignity, she can not be studied too closely or too long. The secret of the universe is now pursued through observation as formerly it was through fasting and prayer." Well, a close and long study of nature will certainly prove that there is a cosmic urge throughout the universe, pushing all things toward beauty. Beauty is the law of the universe and the final aspiration of nature. "He hath made all things beautiful in his time!" said Solomon.

Nature cares nothing for truth, it cares nothing for goodness, its one certain yearning is for the beautiful. Mr. Brownell says: "Art does not stand still. Its canons change. There is a constant evolution in its standards, its requirements." This is not true—of great art. It is true only of trivial art. The *laws* of truly great art are more inflexible than those of the Medes however the *rules* of clever or trivial may change.

It is true that standards of art are not made as a cobbler makes a shoe—they grow. But unless the clearest minds work the soil they never will have a standard.

The one defect of Mr. Brownell's writing in our eyes is that he writes as if he felt that every one of his readers had all the erudition of a Macaulay and the quickness of perception of a Napoleon. This gives it a slight air of "smartness." A little less sophisticated complexity, less involvedness and a touch of even stupid definiteness would help the average reader to get a clear idea of his final meaning and with less effort. This lack of positive definiteness, this ever graceful, even pussy-footing analysis, positively charming though it is, circumscribes his leadership. He has all the intellectual suggestiveness of an Emerson without his bludgeoning positiveness which, velvety though it is in Emerson's style, does yet convince and grip the reader and make of him a convert. What Mr. Brownell needs is a little less modesty and a little more of altruistic egotism, such as will fire him to aim to rule his epoch in æsthetic criticism and so force him to use his exceptional gifts to clarify the air by precision of statements and definitions made invulnerable by simple and clear reasoning and a wealth of pictorial illustration to drive home the truth of his definitions of art, style, manner, beauty, expression, technique—all the elements that enter into the creation, not of trivial, but of great art—the only kind that will endure and the only kind most worthy of the fostering care of the nation!

## "MOONLIGHT"

PAINTING BY RALPH A. BLAKELOCK

(See frontispiece)

THE sad condition of Ralph A. Blakelock has concentrated upon him an amount of attention which was sure to stimulate the progressive rise in the prices paid for his pictures; but in other ways it did not enure to his advantage so far as his standing as a painter is concerned. Undoubtedly his unhappy mental condition had a good deal to do with this rise in prices. Though alive,

the effect was much the same as if he had passed away: thus a definite stop was put to the output from his studio, a limit was placed on the number of his pictures likely to be exposed for sale, and we all know that dealers and cautious collectors take such factors into consideration; so, to this upward impulse the recent revival of interest in his mental trouble came as a further "boost."

The drawback, however, is this: When the price obtained by Blakelocks in the past few years were considered, a much more critical spirit must and did meet the appearance of other pictures by the same hand; more was expected of them; and a large number failed to meet the test.

However, what Blakelock could do at his best is the question; the inferior canvases need not count. Now the serene and simple "Moonlight" which Timothy Cole has engraved as a frontispiece for this number of the magazine represents to our thinking the highest point to which Blakelock attained. It has not, it is true, the rich mosaic quality of some of his smaller pieces, those in which he showed a narrow but jewel-like intensity of color—the subject hardly admits of that—but in the majesty of this night scene he strikes the note of awe. And he has not weakened the impressiveness of the full moon on a summer night by introducing complications. He felt, as many artists before him have, that in a picture of this kind the presence of human or even animal forms might scatter or blunt the effect. Perhaps he was well aware that nine persons out of ten are secretly grateful for suggestions by means of houses, paths, animals or figures that the scene has a human background. In this instance he has painted for the tenth man, who, on the contrary, is grateful that land and wood, water and sky are given purely for their own sake, without association with humanity.

Part of the charm of this picture resides in the pattern made by the trees and moon. Along with a somewhat richer, creamier *facture*, the moonlights of Charles Rollo Peters of California have analogous qualities of pattern. This is colder, clearer and perhaps truer to the atmosphere of the Atlantic seaboard than the moonlights of Peters. Another painter whom one thinks of is the late Albert Pinkham Ryder, who had, however, a much more dramatic vein.

It is in his richly colored pictures of an early date that Blakelock approaches nearest to Ryder, and for excellent reasons, since it was the sight of a little mosaic with Indian figures by him that gave Blake-

lock his start as a painter. While Ryder never returned to the same theme, Blakelock worked the vein freely, and some of his most generally admired pieces—though assuredly they were not his best—belonged to this early time when, consciously or unconsciously, he was under the Ryder influence. Instead of laboring long on his canvases like Ryder, however, he produced with considerable facility, and there was a time when his little pictures could be had for next to nothing. Coincident with the beginning of his mental trouble, however, after he had produced much and found no market, it occurred to a group of collectors of whom the late State Senator Gibbs was one—the "Very Wicked Gibbs" as the *New York Sun* used to call him in its Dana-Danite days—it occurred to this group that a "corner" in Blakelocks would be a good idea; and the plan was carried out. Blakelocks began to disappear from the market, so that when one did come up at a sale, several bidders were on hand; and so the "stock" rose. A complication then ensued. It was comparatively easy to forge little Blakelocks with some approach to his color and method; and forged they were, signature and all. One dealer who had been taken in by such a scampish little canvas was mortified when it was pointed out to him that the imitator had not even taken the trouble to get the name right—it was signed "Blacklock" and offered as a Blakelock. He should have been a Blake-guard and there he was a blackguard! (*A joke of the period.*)

The really fine Blakelocks are sure to hold their own; but there are not many of them; and the rank and file of his pictures are not destined to much consideration in the future. This is as it should be. We rate a man according to his best, and therefore rate Ralph Blakelock high, not because some collectors boosted his pictures, not because he lost his mind and not because a few of his paintings won to sensational figures at sensational sales, but because from time to time he had a spurt of genius and was lucky enough to utilize such a moment by producing a little masterpiece.

## "THE APPROACHING CLOUDBURST"

LANDSCAPE BY HOWARD RUSSELL BUTLER, N. A.

(See opposite page)

LANDSCAPES and shorescapes signed H. R. Butler, painted on the Atlantic seaboard, are familiar enough at the exhibitions of the Academy of Design, New York, those of the Pennsylvania Academy and the international expositions. Howard Russell Butler was elected Associate in 1897 and Academician in 1900 and is now Vice-President of the Academy. He has painted portraits and *genre* a little, but the coast, and especially the coast of Long Island, has kept him busy. Not that he has failed to visit the rockier fringes of Maine nor even to make southward dashes as far as Mexico to paint at Cuernavaca and other places; but until recent years our Atlantic States sufficed him.

Latterly however the Pacific Slope has "cast its

comehither" over Mr. Butler, so that he would alternate one summer at Santa Barbara, California with another at Easthampton, Long Island, where he has a studio residence on the dunes overlooking Lake Georgica and the ocean. Particularly has it been there, perched on the dunes between the placid lagoon effects of Georgica and the restless waves of the Atlantic, that he has studied the effects of wind and sunlight on clouds of different density and painted many a fine lakescape and seascape which have won him medals at home and abroad. Only recently a Maine coast view was the winner of a prize. But since the views from California are less known than those from Long Island and the Maine coast, an example has been taken from the Pacific and is here reproduced in colors.



PAINTED BY RALPH A. BLAKELOCK

"MOONLIGHT"

ENGRAVED BY TIMOTHY COLE

(See page 308)